

LCA Public Comments May 27, 2003 – Houma

1. (Randy Moertle) Freshwater Bayou is the boundary between these two subprovs & there are no measures to address it in any of the alternatives for either of the two. The problem with Freshwater Bayou is that it has widened in some places to 800 feet and the spoilbanks are gone in many sections. Fresh and intermediate areas, particularly around White Lake and other areas where hydrologic control is attempted, are vulnerable to saltwater intrusion coming up the Bayou. There are two main waterways that connect the Bayou with the White Lake area to the west, which have structures on them. But the problem there is that they are circumvented through breaches in the Bayou spoilbank. There are other large areas, including the CWPPRA project, where hydrologic protection is undermined due to loss of spoilbank that facilitates increased water exchange between the Bayou and fragile organic marshes. Mr. Moertle suggests reestablishing the spoilbanks from the gulf up to about the Vermilion River Cutoff with a substantially rocked earthen embankment. There are sections of the Bayou that have been addressed thru CWPPRA already. The west side should be addressed first, if prioritization is necessary.

2. (Rudy Sparks) The Upper Atchafalaya Basin, between Old River Control Structure and Avoca Island, should not have been left out of the LCA project area. The cypress/bottomland forests are very stressed and dying from elevated water levels due to the policy of diverting 30% of Mississippi River flow through that basin. The ORCS should be operated to divert less of Miss. River flow. The Third Delta and Bayou Lafourche measures should be implemented to get flow to the needed areas in southern Terrebonne and Barataria Basins. The Atchafalaya Basin is not large enough to handle the volume of flows from the ORCS, so every year the growth is diminished as trees die and are not replaced with germination and new growth.

3. (Melanie Boudreaux) Inquiring why blue crabs were not included in the species being modeled. Suggests that from a public perspective, people equate Louisiana with shrimp, crawfish, oysters and crabs, and that omitting crabs may cause us to lose the opportunity for those concerned with crabs to relate to this effort and its benefits. Heard about this meeting at the last minute from an "afterthought" e-mail from someone else, and asked why we aren't doing outreach to the general public who have no knowledge, experience or even any current interest in the coast or LCA. Suggests that the best way to reach people is to put out frequent television and radio commercials now that relay the concepts of the huge problem and what the LCA is about. Particularly that teenage and young adult audiences are critical and should be targeted. If the people in LA don't know about it, how will we get their support, and if we don't have it, how will we get the rest of the nation to support this. What we are waiting for?

Questions asked:

1. How do you show land building?
 - Tim Axtman, Project Manager, explained the answer to this.
2. Do you have graphs with acreage growth?

3. Are Barrier Islands included in all areas?
4. What about imbalance of projects in different provinces?
5. Timelines?
6. Public Involvement with local governments?
7. Booster pumps?
8. Spreadsheets?

** There are many landowners who are interested and who do expend personal funds taking defensive action to protect their lands. The example he gave was construction of bulkheads and bankline stabilization. He was talking fairly large scale - hiring tugs, barges, draglines, etc. He mentioned that to save costs where possible, he and other landowners consolidate their work to one job when the work falls in common areas so they aren't paying for three times the tugs, barges, etc. This helps them maximize their expended dollars so more are going toward actual construction and not overhead. If they could tie their money and work to projects where possible, this would help further leverage all funds.

This shows many landowners are willing to commit funds to restoration and protection efforts. Can there be a mechanism set up to facilitate cooperation and fund sharing with landowner projects?

Unfortunately I did not get this gentleman's name, but he owns property in Waterproof, LA near Minor's Canal in Terrebonne Parish.

BREAKOUT SESSION: SUBPROVINCE 3

Comments:

- Speed up permitting process for privately funded restoration measures
- Be concerned with adverse impacts to rural coastal communities that depend on harvest of fish and wildlife species.
- The Old River Control Structure, the interior Atchafalaya basin, and the Coastal Atchafalaya basin operation and restoration measures should be coordinated before any plans are designed.
- Separate the two water sources, Bayou Lafouche and Atchafalaya to obtain no net loss.
- Most attendees favor land-building projects over oyster lease issues.
- Restore barrier islands as buffers not hurricane barriers.
- Address land loss issues first.
- Incorporate navigation industry's needs in coastal wetland restoration plans so that use of existing navigation waterways such as the GIWW and Mississippi River is not impaired.